

# EDUCATING THE “MORE” IN HOLISTIC TRANSPERSONAL HIGHER EDUCATION: A 30+ YEAR PERSPECTIVE ON THE APPROACH OF THE INSTITUTE OF TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

William Braud, Ph.D.  
*Mountain View, CA*

*ABSTRACT:* This article describes a holistic and transpersonal approach to higher education and presents the graduate psychology programs and practices of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) as an illustrative example of this approach, given its 30+ year history. The article describes ITP’s transpersonal and whole-person focus, its experiential learning emphases, its foundational principles and their implementations, a unique six-facet project for assessing students’ transpersonal qualities and transformative changes, and the use of internal and external evidential indicators of its educational effectiveness. The article also addresses issues of transpersonal assessment and research and presents a variety of views of transformative change and spirituality that are relevant to transpersonal psychology. This discussion is useful to anyone wishing to understand how experiential and transpersonal principles and practices might be applied in higher education in order to more effectively foster and serve the full range of human capabilities and potentials—treated in terms of the “More” described by William James.

The object of education is to bring out the best and highest powers in [those being] educated. Do we, in our education, even attempt to bring out the best and highest powers of the spirit, as we seek to develop those of the body and the mind? . . . The mischief is that whatever our theoretic beliefs, we do not in practice really regard spirit as the chief element of our being; the chief object of our educational care . . . It is the whole self which is called to turn towards Divine Reality . . . not some supposed “spiritual” part thereof. (Evelyn Underhill, 1920/1960, pp. 87, 88, 101)

This article addresses the nature of holistic transpersonal education, focusing particularly on graduate education and on the approach of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.), with its overarching and overlapping emphases on transpersonal studies and experiences and on experiential and whole-person learning. The approach’s rationale, implementation, and methods of evaluating its educational effectiveness are considered. For purposes of this article an approach can be considered a form of transpersonal education if either its intention or practice yields experiences or understandings consistent with the construct *transpersonal*, as defined and elaborated below. Transpersonal education can involve transpersonal *content* or a transpersonal *approach or stance*; ideally, both content and stance would be present. It addresses material that can be considered *spiritual* as well as material relevant to the existence and importance of that which is other than, or more than, the typically conceived self. It aims to confront and apprehend the whole of what is studied by means of the whole being of the student; its approach or stance is holistic, inclusive, integrated. It emphasizes and values the continued growth, development, and transformation of the student.

## PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE AND WHY ITP?

The chief purpose of this article is to describe some of the essential features of holistic, experiential, and transpersonal education, and to provide a concrete example of how these features have been applied in the context of higher education. The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (ITP) was chosen as an illustrative example because of its long (over 30 years) and successful history in implementing these principles, and because—although an increasing number of schools now are providing transpersonal offerings—ITP remains the only accredited institution of higher learning that offers a doctoral degree in transpersonal psychology. This example is offered for readers who might wish to understand one way in which transpersonal psychology graduate education has been designed and operationalized successfully. This information may be useful to those who wish to develop similar implementations or devise their own variations on the themes presented herein. It is not the author's intent (nor is there space) to provide detailed historical information about ITP. However, certain aspects of this history may be found in various sections of this article.

## EMPHASES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Described most directly and simply, the Institute's aim is to help its students recognize that there is More (see William James' treatment of a More, below)<sup>1</sup> to our ways of knowing, being, and doing, and More to our nature and worldview, than commonly is recognized in conventional academic education. The aim is to help students learn about the nature of this More, access it better, integrate its aspects more fully into their lives, and share the benefits of this learning and integration with others by means of their own teaching, research, and practical applications. In this approach to transpersonal education the transpersonal aspect provides the academic content and informs the stance of the practitioner, while a holistic and experiential emphasis informs the pedagogy.

The major subareas to be addressed in this article include (a) the meaning of a transpersonal emphasis, in general; (b) an emphasis on experiential learning; (c) expanded meanings of intellect and ways of knowing; and (d) transpersonal approaches to inquiry and research. The presentation of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology's program and practices, as an illustrative example, will indicate specific, concrete ways in which these subareas can be addressed and integrated.

### *Transpersonal Emphasis*

In surveying an extensive set of definitions of transpersonal psychology, Lajoie and Shapiro (1992) found that the most frequently mentioned themes involved states of consciousness, one's highest or ultimate potential, going beyond ego or personal self, transcendence, and spirituality. In a subsequent and more theoretically neutral treatment, Walsh and Vaughan (1993) emphasized the study of transpersonal experiences "in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the

individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos” (p. 203). They indicated that this emphasis did not exclude or invalidate the personal but, rather, “set personal concerns within a larger context that acknowledges the importance of both personal and transpersonal experiences. Indeed, one interpretation of the term transpersonal is that the transcendent is expressed through (trans) the personal” (p. 203). A century ago, William James (1902/1985) expressed a similar idea in describing succinctly how one becomes conscious of and in touch with “a MORE” with which one is “conterminous and continuous” (p. 508); and Van Dusen (1999) recently conveyed the essence of the transpersonal in speaking of the “More-than-Self” (p. 42) and how one relates to the latter. Van Dusen provides one of the most straightforward and satisfying statements of the transpersonal stance: “to love, honor, care for, or respect what is more than yourself” (p. 57).

In a recent issue of this *Journal*, Caplan, Hartelius, and Rardin (2003) updated and expanded our understanding of the nature and emphases of *transpersonal psychology*—and, indirectly, the nature of *transpersonal* itself—in their presentation of the views of 41 individuals who are active in the field. What stands out, especially, in that presentation is the increased richness and diversity of the expressed views. Recent developments, concepts, and approaches within the new but rapidly growing field of *positive psychology* (Lopez & Snyder, 2003; Snyder & Lopez, 2002, 2007) also have helped us refine our understanding of *transpersonal* and how that overlaps and differs from what is treated in that new area of study.

Positive psychology is beginning to explore topics treated by transpersonal psychology decades earlier. However, the former can be distinguished from the latter in terms of its subject matter and its approaches. Positive psychology continues to emphasize qualities within the realms of ego and, sometimes, of self *actualization* (with less attention to features *beyond* ego and features of self *transcendence*), and it tends to continue to approach its subject matter using positivistic research strategies (which emphasize quantitative, behavioral, and cognitive methods) rather than the more radical empiricist, pluralistic epistemology (which includes qualitative methods, experiential methods, and alternative modes of knowing) advocated by many transpersonal psychologists (see, e.g., Braud & Anderson, 1998).

The *transpersonal* might be described succinctly as ways in which individuals, societies, and disciplines might increase their ambit and become more inclusive and expansive in areas of sense of identity (including ways of being and ways of functioning beyond the typical egocentric mode), development and transformation, conditions of consciousness, ways of knowing, values, and service. The transpersonal also involves recognizing and honoring the *spiritual* aspects of our being, actions, and ways of thinking.

In discussing transpersonal *education*—as a way of drawing out or leading forth (*educare*) transpersonal qualities in practice—Clark (i.e., Frances Vaughan) (1974) stressed its concerns with the study and development of consciousness (especially “higher states of consciousness” [p. 1]) and with “the spiritual quest as an essential aspect of human life” (p. 1). She emphasized its devotion to knowledge and the “discovery of truth” (p. 1), its interest in “questions of value, meaning and purpose” (p. 1), its valuing of subjective experience and intrapersonal (as well as

interpersonal) work, and the importance of an open, nonauthoritarian, nondogmatic attitude in doing all of these things. Clark also emphasized that transpersonal education “seeks to balance knowledge about a subject with direct intuitive knowing of particular states of being” (p. 4), and that it “seeks to affirm the deepest insights of human experience, be they scientific or religious, rational or intuitive” (p. 5). These last statements suggest a *pluralistic epistemology*, which is an important emphasis of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology’s programs.

### *Emphasis on Whole Person Learning*

In seeking to help students encounter the transpersonal and the “More-than-Self,” a first step is to acknowledge that there are valid ways of knowing and learning other than an exclusively “mental” way of reason and discursive intellect. In describing the model of transpersonal education that was later to become actualized in the Institute’s programs, Frager (1974) indicated.

At the core of the model is an emphasis on the balanced development of the whole individual, including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual growth and integration. The model is designed to provide students with tools for working with others at all levels and, more important, to facilitate each student’s growth and development. Knowledge of psychological theories and techniques are important, but even more important is the state of consciousness, the being of a teacher or a therapist. This model can be viewed as part of the life-long growth of the individual, and its completion understood more as a foundation for further development than as the conclusion of learning. (p. 164)

Since its founding in 1975, the Institute has remained true to this model by providing, in its curriculum, opportunities for training and balancing of body, emotion, mind, and spirit. Later, two additional areas were introduced into the Institute’s academic programs: a community-relational emphasis and a creative expression emphasis. The Institute’s work in these explicitly identified six areas of study (physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, community-relational, and creative expressive) is consistent with, and often anticipated, current interest and developments in multiple ways of knowing (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Shepherd, 1993), “multiple intelligences” (Gardner, 1983), “emotional intelligence” (Goleman, 1994; Payne, 1985; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) “spiritual intelligence” (Noble, 2000; Woodhouse, 2003; Zohar & Marshall, 2000), and related areas. Recently, it has been suggested that two additional areas—ecopsychology (ecological awareness) and diversity (appreciation of diverse ways of being in the world)—be added to the six areas already emphasized by the Institute.

Recognizing and addressing multiple modes of knowing, being, and doing constitute a whole-person approach to learning and education. A whole-person approach includes, but is not limited to, the following aspects of human functioning: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal “intelligences” (Gardner, 1983); emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1994; Salovey & Mayer, 1990); and ways of learning about and interacting

with others and with the world that are characterized by feeling, receptivity, subjectivity, multiplicity, nurturing, cooperation, intuition, relatedness, and connectedness (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Shepherd, 1993). A whole person approach also recognizes and addresses a variety of conditions of consciousness (“normal or ordinary,” “altered,” “nonordinary,” and “pure”; cf. Forman, 1997, 1999; Grof, 1972; Tart, 1975), their capabilities and limitations, and the nature of what can be known or not known in these respective states and experiences. Along these lines, Roberts (1989) has suggested the development of a multistate form of education that would recognize a variety of *mindbody states*, explore *mindbody psychotechnologies* (methods of producing these different states), and learn about and promote the human abilities and inabilities and their analogs that reside in the different mindbody states. Within a Jungian framework, the practitioner of whole-person learning would honor all of the four *functions*—thinking, feeling, sensing, intuiting—as well as that *tertium quid*, the transcendent function, which simultaneously holds, balances, and integrates both conscious and unconscious materials (Jung, 1916/1969, 1921/1971). The different modes of knowing mentioned above have been incorporated, in various ways, into the Institute’s programs, curricula, courses, and other offerings, especially in its emphasis on experiential learning.

### *Emphasis on Experiential Learning*

Because many of the components of whole-person learning are based on specific and concrete experiences, much of whole-person learning is experiential in nature. “Experiential” learning is fully and deeply lived, immediate, and embodied; it tends to be particular and concrete. It is distinguished from forms of learning (e.g., academic or intellectual forms) that are further removed from what is to be known—i.e., that are mediated—and that tend to be more abstract and cognitive. The Institute’s programs have both experiential and intellectual components. This blend can provide deeper and more complete understandings, appreciations, and apprehensions of ourselves, others, and the world at large than can either mode alone.

The distinction between experiential and intellectual learning has interesting relatives and an interesting pedigree. The following section sketches some of the history of experiential learning, how it differs from other forms of learning and knowing, and how it appears in certain spiritual and wisdom traditions.

According to Roger Bacon (1268/1928), there are two modes of acquiring knowledge: by *reasoning* [*argument*] and by *experience*. For Bacon, nothing can be sufficiently known without experience; when one has had an actual experience, one’s mind is made certain and rests in the full light of truth.

William James, in the *Principles* (1890/1950), distinguished two kinds of knowledge: *knowledge of [or by] acquaintance* (of which feelings, emotions, and sensations are the vehicles) and *knowledge-about* (which might also be called representative knowledge, and of which thoughts, conceptions, and judgments are the vehicles) (pp. 221–222). The latter can be imparted to others; the former, because it is a direct and immediate experience, cannot be so imparted—through

conventional means—but must be partaken of, directly, by another, in order to be appreciated.

This Jamesian distinction echoes one made within the Sufi tradition:

Knowledge is empty unless it is connected internally with what is known. Reason always means knowledge at a distance, across the mediation of language and concepts; but wisdom presupposes something like the intimacy of becoming what one knows. “What a difference there is,” al-Ghazali writes in his autobiography, “between *knowing* the definition of health and satiety, together with their causes and presuppositions, and *being* healthy and satisfied!” (p. 55). Only the mystics can raise knowledge to the level of *gnosis* (ma’rifa), in which one experiences what one knows with all the intimacy of being . . . (Bruns, 1992, p. 127)

Within the Naqshbandi tradition, the forms of knowing are elaborated further:

Three “kinds of knowledge” . . . have to be separated, and the difference has to be felt:

1. The description of something—as in the words used to convey the idea of a fruit;
2. The feeling of something, as when one can see, feel, and smell a fruit;
3. The perceptive connection with something, as when one takes and tastes, eats and absorbs a fruit.

These three departments of cognition are described in more technical language as:

1. Certain knowledge (Ilm-al-Yaqin), which comes from the intellect, which tells us that there is a fruit;
2. Eye of certainty (Ayn-al-Yaqin), which is from the “inner eye,” and operates like the senses but in relation to deeper things; the “assessment of a fruit”;
3. Perfect truth (Haqq-al-Yaqin), which is the experience of “union with Truth.” (Schneck, 1980, pp. 32–33)

Mention of the “eye of certainty” calls to mind the three “eyes”—the “eye of the flesh,” the “eye of reason,” and the “eye of contemplation”—and the various ways of knowing (of the senses, of the mind, of the spirit) elaborated by Boethius, by Hugh of St. Victor and other Victorine mystics (Richard of St. Victor, Thomas of St. Victor), by Bonaventure, and by Thomas Aquinas (see Boethius, 524/1980; Bonaventure, 1259/1953; McGinn, 1996, 1998; Thomas Aquinas, 1267–1273/1971). (A more modern appreciation of the “three eyes” can be found in Ken Wilber’s *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm*, 1990.)

To these forms of knowing should be added knowing through affect, compassion, and love; through being and becoming what is to be known; through direct knowing and intuition; through sympathetic resonance and empathy; and through “unknowing” (see Braud & Anderson, 1998; Forman, 1999). Additional modes of knowing would include tacit knowing and personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1964), as well as a form of knowing, *mimesis*, described by Havelock (1963) and by Simon

(1978). In *mimesis*, as a member of the audience of a performance, one comes to know through imitation, personal identification, and sympathetic resonance with a performer. Havelock and Simon contend that this form of knowing featured prominently among the pre-Homeric and early-Homeric Greeks, but was increasingly abandoned when oral, poetic, and dramatic communication styles were superseded by the written and prose preferences of Plato and his contemporaries. Related to *mimesis* is ritual, which can itself provide forms of knowing not otherwise possible (see Deslauriers, 1992) and can facilitate transformative change, especially in liminal contexts (see McMahon, 1998).

Experiential learning involves appreciations and apprehensions that occur through the direct, personal experiences of our lives. They need not be limited to only one or to a few facets of our nature, but may occur in any, and any combination, of the forms mentioned above.

In a passage cited earlier, Frager (1974) mentioned the state of consciousness and the *being* of a teacher or therapist. In experiential learning, as in all knowing, the nature and being of the knower are important determinants of what can be known or experienced. The importance of the knower's qualities and dispositions is recognized, currently, in the concept of the *theoretical sensitivity* of the investigator, within the qualitative research approach of grounded theory (Glaser, 1978). The same concept appears within all spiritual and wisdom traditions and within all systems of transformative practice. One place in which this has been formally explicated is in the principle of the *adaequatio* (adequateness or preparedness) of the knower (see, e.g., Schumacher, 1978, pp. 39–60). We can experience, perceive, and know only that for which our sensitivities have prepared us, and these sensitivities and dispositions depend upon aspects of our very being. Other expressions of the importance of the preparedness of the knower can be seen in the following quotations:

Therefore, first let each become godlike and each beautiful who cares to see God and Beauty. (Ennead 1.6.9) All knowing comes by likeness. (Ennead 1.8.1) (Plotinus, circa 250/1966–1988)

Everything that is known is comprehended not according to its own nature, but according to the ability to know of those who do the knowing? (Boethius, 524/1980, p. 157)

Knowledge occurs according as the thing known is in the knower. But the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower. Hence the knowledge of every knower is according to the mode of its own nature. If therefore the mode of anything's being exceeds the mode of the nature of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of that thing is above the nature of the knower. (Thomas Aquinas, 1267–1273/1971, p. 53)

To no one type of mind is it given to discern the totality of truth. Something escapes the best of us—not accidentally, but systematically, and because we have a twist . . . . Facts are there only for those who have a mental affinity with them. (William James, 1890/1956, p. 301)

We behold that which we are. (Underhill, 1911/1969, p. 423)

Only the Real can know Reality. (Underhill, 1911/1969, p. 436)

Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing . . . Nor are changes in the knower's physiological or intellectual being the only ones to affect his knowledge. What we know depends also on what, as moral beings, we choose to make ourselves. (Huxley, 1944/1970, pp. viii, ix)

Practice may change our theoretical horizon, and this in a twofold way: it may lead into new worlds and secure new powers. Knowledge we could never attain, remaining what we are, may be attainable in consequences of higher powers and a higher life, which we may morally achieve. (William James, cited in Huxley, 1944/1970, p. viii)

### *Expanded Meanings of Education and Intellect*

In the author's view, most forms of modern higher education are relatively narrow in their scope, emphasizing intellectual development alone and subscribing, at that, to a narrow view of intellect. This assumption can be validated by perusing the catalogs of various well-known institutions of higher learning. Modern and postmodern conceptions of both education and intellect have limited and distorted earlier views of these processes. Early Greek education, in contrast, attempted to address the complete individual, emphasizing not only "a sound mind in a sound body," but attending to a wide range of pursuits, including reading, writing, poetry, gymnastics, mathematics, philosophy, and science. Similarly, the early Greeks' understanding of intellect was different and much broader. *Intellect (Nous)* was the largest manifestation of mind, and the term was used much as we use *heart* (in a certain sense) today. *Nous* encompassed the deepest core of one's being—"more spiritual than mind, more intellectual than spirit" (Underhill, 1960, p. 121). Through this intellect, humanity's highest faculty, one could know the inner essences or principles of things by means of direct apprehension or perception. *Nous* was distinguished from *dianoia* (the discursive, conceptualizing, and logical faculty); the latter was only a part of the former (see Palmer, Sherrard & Ware, 1995, pp. 427–437). (In the well known opening passage of *Ennead* 4.8.1, Plotinus mentions descending from Intellect [*Nous*] to discursive reasoning [*dianoia*].) If we were to review representative "mainstream" professional publications today, we would find that, in both general and academic parlance, the meaning of *intellect* has been narrowed and reversed; taken to signify rational, analytical, discursive thinking, it is more appropriate to the workings of a computer than to the experiences of a human being. The Institute, through its emphases on whole-person and experiential learning, and on multiple ways of knowing, seeks to expand both education and intellect, and return them to their earlier, more inclusive, status.

### *Transpersonal Research Approaches*

The expansions of educational content and approaches described above carry over into the teaching and conduct of transpersonal research (see Braud, 1998a, 2004; Braud & Anderson, 1998). Transpersonal research endeavors are characterized by



expansiveness and inclusiveness, as well as sensitivity and nuance. One aims to confront the whole of what one is researching with the whole of one's being, in order to acquire descriptions and understandings of one's topic that are as rich, deep, "thick," and complete as possible.

Expansiveness and inclusiveness are realized in the researcher's use of multiple modes of knowing in collecting, working with, and communicating data and findings and in the researcher's radical empirical stance toward the subject matter. *Radical empiricism* is, of course, an epistemological stance advocated by William James (1912/1976), in which one includes only what is based in experience, but includes *everything* that is based in experience. James also espoused a *radical ontology*—although he never used this term—in which the real is considered to be anything that we find ourselves obliged to take into account in any way (James, 1911). I offer the term *radical ontology* and mention it here because it is important to recognize how epistemology and ontology are intimately interrelated.

The multiple modes of knowing include not only familiar "left-hemispheric," theoretical, rational, linear, analytical, verbal research skills, but also less frequently emphasized, but equally important, complementary, "right-hemispheric," experiential, body-based, sensory-based, intuitive, imagistic, and holistic techniques and skills. The transpersonal researcher adapts transpersonal, psychospiritual skills and practices such as mindfulness, discernment, compassion, and appreciation and honoring of differences (in all domains) for use in research projects. The researcher can supplement these, in all phases of research, with skills such as intention-setting; attention-focusing; bodymind quieting; extended and nuanced uses of vision, audition, proprioception, and kinesthesia; imagery, visualization, and imagination; direct knowing, intuition, and empathic identification; play; and accessing typically unconscious materials and processes (through dream incubation, active imagination, and other techniques). Forms of creative expression and embodied writing (Anderson, 2001) may be used in communicating research findings.

The transpersonal researcher uses quantitative, qualitative, and blended-methods research designs in order to explore topics of interest. She or he allows the work to be informed not only by findings and conceptualizations within transpersonal psychology; psychology at large; and the natural, social, and human sciences; but also by the accumulated knowledge and methods of the humanities, the expressive arts, and the great philosophical, wisdom, and spiritual traditions—ancient, modern, and postmodern.

The transpersonal researcher is concerned not only with the acquiring of new *information* (what Clements, 2004, has called "changes of mind") for the researcher and for expanding the knowledge base of the discipline, but also with the potential *transformation* (which Clements has called "changes of heart") of everyone involved in the research enterprise. Those who might be transformed by a research project include the investigator, the research participants, those who receive the research findings (the research project's "audience"), and, ultimately, society at large.

Because the researcher is likely to be investigating a topic of great personal meaning, because a wide range of research skills will be used in the investigation, and because

the researcher will be taking a more involved, rather than distancing, stance in the research project, the personal characteristics of the researcher are of utmost importance in transpersonal research—just as personal qualities of the practitioner are of great importance in transpersonal forms of therapy, counseling, and other practical applications (see above). The researcher herself or himself is the chief “instrument” in transpersonal research, especially if qualitative methods are employed; therefore, the preparedness or adequateness (*adaequatio*; see Schumacher, 1978) of the researcher is crucial to the success of the research project. Such preparedness can be enhanced by the researcher’s own prior experiences with the topic being investigated; in grounded theory, this is known as the researcher’s *theoretical sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978). Researcher preparedness or adequateness also can be increased through deliberate prior training of the complementary, holistic research skills mentioned above. Braud and Anderson (1998, especially pp. 20–22), Coppin and Nelson (2004), and Louchakova (2005) have provided useful suggestions for enhancing researcher preparedness.

The *topics* addressed by a transpersonal researcher are likely to be those mentioned in previous sections of this article, especially the *Transpersonal Emphasis* section. However, a wide range of additional topics may be investigated through a transpersonal lens or stance and/or with an aim of learning the possible transpersonal aspects, implications, or applications of those topics.

#### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATIONS

In addition to its Residential doctoral training, which the Institute has been providing since 1975, and its Residential evening Master’s training, which began in 1988, the Institute has been providing *distance learning* Certificates and Master’s degree offerings, since 1983, in what had been called the Institute’s External Program (later renamed the Global Programs). In the summer of 2002, the Institute began offering doctoral degree training as part of its Global Programs. The Global Program’s transpersonal psychology offerings take the forms of the study of course modules individually supervised by mentors, attendance at week-long residential Seminars, online courses and discussions led by core faculty, thesis and dissertation work, and supervision by faculty advisors and practicum instructors. As a more inclusive illustration of the Institute’s approach to transpersonal education, the philosophical or foundational principles that guide the Institute’s programs, along with ways in which these principles have been implemented in the Global Ph.D. Program, are presented in Table 1.

The most salient transpersonal educational aspects of these principles and implementations are (a) the strong emphasis on fostering experiential learning and supporting the psychospiritual growth and transformation of students; (b) an emphasis on transpersonal content and approaches; (c) a recognition and honoring of the great spiritual, wisdom, and philosophical traditions as formal psychologies and metaphysical systems; (d) the inclusion of multiple ways of knowing, including the translation of holistic, transpersonal, and spiritual skills and practices into methods of education and research; (e) application of transpersonal principles and practices in four application areas or contexts (individuals, small groups, larger groups, the

Table 1  
*Foundational Principles and Curricular Implementations in the ITP Global Ph.D. Program*

Seven Major Philosophical or Foundational Principles	Implementations of the Principles in the Global Ph.D. Program Curriculum
Personal growth and transformation of the student	Experiential aspects; emphasis on self-work, growth, development, and transformative change; personal application and integration of course materials; aims of research include both information and transformation (of participants, researcher, audience, field, society at large)
Maturity and uniqueness of transpersonal psychology as a field of study	Emphasis on transpersonally relevant areas, methods, and findings, rather than on “conventional psychology” and the development of the key transpersonal qualities of mindfulness, discernment, compassion, and appreciation of differences in working with conventional topics in psychology and related disciplines.
Epistemologies of heart and intellect as ways of knowing	Courses translate transpersonal, spiritual, and holistic ways of knowing into research skills and incorporates creative expression in various forms such as visual art, dance, and storytelling into teaching and community activities.
Wisdom psychologies of the world’s spiritual, religious, and philosophical traditions	Indigenous, Eastern, and Western metaphysical systems emphasized in three-part foundational course, with reminders in other courses
Expansion of transpersonal psychology to interpersonal, communal, and global systems	Research, theory, and application of transpersonal principles takes place in four Application Areas or Contexts—individuals, small groups (dyads, families), larger groups (organizations), global community/ecology/the more than human world
A spacious and collaborative learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.	Teaching, curriculum goals, and administrative style encourage the creativity and integrity of students, faculty, and staff to contribute and sustain a learning environment that changes and refines itself over time; collaborative work with Mentors and Faculty Advisors and in Research Groups and Global Seminars.
Application of transpersonal principles to service in the world	Transpersonal Practica that emphasize two application areas (primary and secondary); field advanced through scholarly publications and also through practical applications and public education (including semipopular and popular publications, workshops, etc.)

*Note:* The content of this table was developed, jointly, by Institute of Transpersonal Psychology core faculty members Rosemarie Anderson and William Braud. Used by permission.

global community and more-than-human world); and (f) advancement of the field of transpersonal psychology not only through research and professional publications, but also through educational and practical services to the general public, and through individual living and embodiment of transpersonal, spiritual qualities.

#### ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Having described aspects of the transpersonal education approach, it is important to address ways in which the effectiveness of this approach has been or might be

assessed and evaluated. A wide range of methods have been used to assess transpersonal educational effectiveness, and these are addressed in the following sections. Here, only the methods and measures themselves are described. The outcomes and results of these assessments are not presented in this article, but are available from the author.

### *Qualities Assessed*

A longitudinal educational research project (called the Transformation Research Project [TRP], and later renamed the Transpersonal Assessments Practicum [TAP] ) was initiated in 1995 in order to assess student qualities, and possible changes relevant to transpersonal experiences and to psychospiritual growth and development. Some of these qualities are immediately apparent and are directly related to the explicit aims and content of the Institute's programs. Other qualities were identified through discussions among the Institute's core faculty. The TRP/TAP project assessed qualities and characteristics that were parts of, or related to: self-actualization, self-transcendence, a transpersonal (i.e., not exclusively egoic) self concept or identity, openness and interconnectedness, surrender and acceptance, change, mood, body awareness and somatic knowing, environmental awareness, spirituality, values, mindfulness, discernment, compassion, appreciation of differences, personal growth, integration, individuation, and possible transformative changes. Some of these resemble dimensions of the meditative experience identified by Osis, Bokert, and Carlson (1973) and by Kohr (1977). Although these two studies explored state-like experiences associated with meditation, one would expect some overlap of such qualities with the more persistent qualities that might emerge in students as fruits of the Institute's transpersonal education approach.

It is important to note what this TRP/TAP project did not address. It did not attempt to assess traditional areas of academic performance or achievement, nor did it assess content knowledge; these academic objectives were evaluated more conventionally within specific courses. The project did not involve personality assessments, nor did it attempt to address indications of affective, behavioral, or cognitive deficits or pathology indicators that derive from deficiency or medical models of psychological functioning. Rather, the emphasis was upon psychospiritual health, well-being, and growth.

### *The Role of Assessment*

A general discussion of assessment and transpersonal assessment is useful, so that the reader might understand the Institute's approach to these issues. It is important to understand the ways in which transpersonal assessment overlaps and differs from more conventional forms of assessment.

Friedman and MacDonald (1997) summarized important characteristics of assessment and testing; described pragmatic advantages of assessments (emphasizing clinical uses such as providing increased accountability to third-party payers and demonstrating the clinical efficacy of alternative treatment interventions); indicated some reasons for the de-emphasis of, and resistance to, assessments often found in the

transpersonal area; and suggested their own approach to assessment—one that is more congenial to transpersonal interests and values. Assessment involves the use of interviews, standardized testing, and (possibly) physiological measurements in order to collect information for arriving at an accurate and unbiased understanding of the functioning of clients, to determine strengths and weaknesses, to help select appropriate interventions, and to help evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions. Friedman and MacDonald suggested that, despite their possible advantages, assessments have been viewed by many transpersonalists as being incompatible with their transpersonal or spiritual orientation. They offered reasons for this resistance to assessments: (a) traditional assessments derive from medical or pathology-oriented models, (b) traditional assessment emphasizes theory and techniques, rather than the qualities of the practitioner's values, beliefs, and attitudes that are so important to transpersonalists, and (c) transpersonal and spiritual content, constructs, and theories are not well represented in standard assessment procedures and interpretations. To address these resistances, Friedman and MacDonald recommended a form of *transpersonal assessment*, which they defined as

an activity requiring professional judgment whereby the practitioner and client work collaboratively at arriving at an expanded conception of the client, including viewing non-ordinary states and both their antecedents and consequences as potentially, but not necessarily, beneficial, for the purpose of enhancing the client's growth and development of self-awareness and health. In the process of developing such an understanding of the client, the practitioner relies upon transpersonal theory in a systematic way (e.g., through the use of standardized measures of transpersonal constructs) and examines his/her potential biases as an essential aspect of the assessment. (p. 112)

Shapiro (1989) described some of the roles of assessment in transformational journeys. Although his comments were directed toward a particular form, Judaism, they apply also to transformational paths in general. Assessments can indicate “where one is” in any transformational process. Whether made by oneself or by others, assessments can provide fair witness descriptions of where one has been, where one now is, and where one is going, in terms of one's life, being, or spiritual practice. The particular assessments that may be used grow out of the nature and goals of the journey one is undertaking. Assessments by others or the use of indirect (e.g., projective) methods can help minimize or bypass the various defenses, distortions, self-deceptions, and incomplete knowings that may pose difficulties for honest, deliberate self-assessment. Shapiro pointed out that the very act of assessment (e.g., self-observation) can actually be a type of intervention that can help one move further in the desired direction. What we answer to the question, “Where are we?” and *how* we respond (do we fear, avoid, hide, refuse responsibility?) can provide useful clues about how far we have traveled and how much yet remains to be done, in our psychospiritual journey.

At a more mundane level, Friedman and MacDonald (1997, p. 113) provided another example of how an assessment can play the role of an intervention. They pointed out that positive validation, through assessment feedback, for non-ordinary experiences could serve as an effective intervention for one who fears that such experiences might be pathological.

Within a variety of spiritual traditions, observing, without harsh judgment, how one is responding to one's thoughts and emotions, how one is approaching a *koan*, how one is praying, how one works with "energies," or how one is using visualization and imagination can provide additional practice in using particular methods and can help us determine the efficacy and fruits of these methods. The manner in which we carry out self-assessments, and our reactions to the outcomes of these assessments, can be quite revealing. Assessments can provide benchmarks or reference points of how we have been progressing along a chosen spiritual path. They may also yield indications of what seems to be working well or poorly, and which areas are in need of greater attention.

In this particular project, assessments were used as descriptive indicators of the student participants' present circumstances and seeming trajectories. They provided indications of what was happening in the Institute's programs (in terms of the particular qualities and dimensions addressed), how students were responding to various aspects of the programs, and which factors seemed to be working or not working for them. The resultant information could be used by the students for self-reflection and self-evaluation and by the Institute's faculty and administration as feedback for systemic program evaluation and adjustment. Direct assessments of student learning and changes also provided indirect assessments of the Institute's programs, because the former could be viewed as possible outcomes or fruits of the latter. Additionally, engaging in the assessment procedures provided opportunities for the students to practice and refine a wide range of research methods, while focusing these methods on a topic of great interest to them: their own experiences and changes in areas relevant to their chosen transpersonal and psychological studies and concerns. The uses just mentioned can be generalized to other educational contexts.

We should not leave the topic of assessment without noting an important recent critique by Edwards (2003) of the usual standardized, Likert-scale types of assessment instruments favored in conventional areas of psychology. The use of such instruments in a less than thoughtful manner may introduce biases when assessing transpersonal experiences—biases that typically are not recognized or adequately addressed. Edwards highlighted four problems inherent in typical transpersonal questionnaires, when these are used to assess constructs such as spirituality and mystical experiences. He argued that (a) the design of some questionnaires has been so closely modeled on the design of traditional psychometric scales that unclear wording of questions has resulted; (b) the design of such scales has sometimes (even if not consciously) been heavily influenced by Jewish and Christian monotheism, rendering their use to assess spiritual experiences among other groups (e.g., polytheistic Pagans, Buddhists) problematical; (c) such scales typically refer to experiences having to do with "God" rather than a "Goddess," indicating an implicit patriarchal bias; and (d) a bias towards logical thinking has precluded researchers from appreciating how, in transpersonal research, mid-range ratings on Likert-type scales may be intentional references to paradox (p. 3). Such "neutral" ratings may suggest a "both/and" (transcendent and inclusive) appreciation of both "poles" of a questionnaire item and could imply that some mid-range scores might actually indicate a greater level of a transpersonally relevant quality than might higher scores. Two of Edwards' critiques are especially relevant to diversity

concerns, when dealing with transpersonal theory and research. Aspects of Edwards' critiques also are relevant to the ongoing debate as to whether mystical and "pure consciousness" experiences themselves might be identical or different for persons whose lives have been strongly informed by different traditions.

*The Six Facets of the TAP (Transpersonal Assessments Practicum):  
A Pluralistic Approach*

Informed by a recently proposed *integral inquiry* approach to transpersonal studies (Braud, 1998b), and heeding Carl Jung's (1993) dictum, "Ultimate truth, if there be such a thing, demands the concert of many voices" (p. xiv), a variety of complementary research methods were used in this TRP/TAP educational effectiveness assessment project. The approach can be conceptualized as one of convergent operations involving triangulation of methods and triangulation of investigators (because several researchers were involved in the study's different facets). Student qualities, characteristics, changes, and patterns were assessed, evaluated, and interpreted in six major ways:

1. Currently enrolled students and graduates of the Institute's programs participated in initial surveys that focused on self-perceived experiences and changes in the six areas emphasized at the Institute.
2. Descriptive, group-statistical, and correlational analyses were performed on the results of a battery of standardized assessments administered upon entrance into the program and at the ends of the first and second years.
3. Students participated in a qualitative self-study that was based upon self observations and self reflections made throughout their first 2 years in the program.
4. Students participated in a qualitative study of a randomly assigned peer member of the entering cohort, based on observations throughout the 2 years and on interviews conducted at the ends of the first and second years.
5. Analyses and interpretations were made of the results of a standardized, holistic/intuitive *projective differential* (PD; Reynolds, 1997) procedure that qualitatively and quantitatively assessed the students' salient integration of cognitive and affective reactions to themselves and to the program, at the beginning and at the end of the first 2 years in the program. The PD uses choice responses to very briefly presented pairs of carefully designed, abstract images in order to register holistic, intuitive, affective (nonverbal, "unconscious") reactions, preferences, and attitudes. It has features similar to those of the more familiar Semantic Differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). It resembles a tachistoscopic Rorschach presentation. The rapid and projective nature of the procedure serves to minimize deliberate, conscious distortions, and, therefore, the PD results may have greater validity than do many deliberate, verbal assessments. The PD procedures also include built-in indicators of the discrepancy or incongruence between its own novel (imagistic, intuitive, affective) measures and more traditional (verbal, consciously and deliberately considered) measures.
6. A "net of qualities" strategy was used to examine linkages and chains of associations between the measures used in this project and identical and related measures used by other investigators in other projects.

It was expected that using several methods for describing the same or similar student characteristics would help overcome the biases and limitations that could arise from using only one approach, that this plurality of methods would provide more extensive and inclusive descriptions of the characteristics assessed, and that the findings would be appreciated by a wide range of inquirers with different backgrounds, interests, and research styles.

### *Educational and Student Research Aspects*

Among the benefits of participating in this TRP/TAP educational research project was the opportunity for students to gain first-hand, practical experience with a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods. These methods highlighted in the project included standardized assessments and their interpretation, statistical analysis of their own and of the student cohort's results, questionnaires, interviewing, self-reflection, participant observation, projective testing, qualitative content and thematic analysis, and report-writing. These project activities were supported by course work and by other forms of assistance. For example, students worked with project data (with appropriate confidentiality safeguards) in their quantitative research methods and qualitative research methods courses and in specialized research groups. An end-of-year-2 research practicum supported their completion of the project and their preparation of a formal project report. The principles and practices used in the project were derived from or informed by a variety of methodological approaches including experimental and quasi-experimental designs, single-subject designs, action research, correlational and group-statistical methods, field studies, case studies, phenomenological, heuristic, and feminist research approaches.

### *Additional Indicators*

The foregoing sections described methods specially designed to assess the transpersonal aspects of this educational approach. These assessments focus on what might be called the *personal and transpersonal* skills of the students. In addition to these "dedicated" indicators used in the TRP/TAP, a number of more conventional indicators are used to assess the more conventional aspects of the Institute's programs. For this purpose, the students' *academic* and *professional* skills are evaluated, using both internal (within the Institute) and external (outside of the Institute) indicators.

Student academic skills already are well recognized; they include familiarity and facility with the content, approaches, and methods of psychology and transpersonal psychology, critical thinking, comprehension, communication, and scholarly writing. Students have opportunities to identify, practice, and develop these skills in the assigned readings, discussions, assignments, and writing requirements of all formal courses. *Internal* evidential indicators of the effective acquisition and practice of these academic skills include admissions reviews, performance in courses, the adequacy of a doctoral qualifying paper (for Ph.D. students), completion of a satisfactory Transpersonal Application and Integration Paper, mentor and advisor evaluations, review and approval of a preliminary dissertation proposal



(miniproposal), and reviews of thesis proposals, theses, dissertation proposals, and dissertations by the student's thesis and dissertation committees. External evidential indicators of academic skills include proposal and dissertation reviews by Expert Outside Readers and Outside Members of the dissertation committees, reviews by practicum and internship supervisors, peer-reviewed professional presentations, peer-reviewed publications, citations of one's work by others, and awards and honors (including fellowships, internships, and grants).

During the course of their transpersonal education, students learn to identify and practice professional skills in areas of clinical practice, counseling, spiritual guidance, creative expression, transpersonal education and research, and several certificate/specialization areas. *Internal* evidential indicators of the excellence of these professional skills include performance in professional skills courses, performance in "internal" practicum courses, professional application reports, and satisfactory completion of certificate/specialization requirements. *External* evidential indicators of professional excellence include community service, external practicum and internship supervisor evaluations, performance on written and oral licensing examinations, and finding and successfully engaging in relevant employment.

#### SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF TRANSFORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Because transformation and spirituality feature so prominently in transpersonal education, theory, research, practices, and experiences, salient views on these two constructs or processes are described below. These particular subareas are highlighted here because of their great relevance to transpersonal psychology.

##### *Views on Transformation and Transformative Change*

As they participate in the Institute's transpersonal education programs, students have a great variety of experiences, and they "change" in various ways. This section provides representative views on the nature of transformation and transformative change that might help clarify which of these reported changes might be indicative of transformation.

Metzner (1986) has distinguished *transformation* from what he calls *transcendence*:

To *transcend* is to go beyond; to *transform* is to make different. We transcend a given state of consciousness or a personality characteristic by rising above it . . . or by moving beyond it. The . . . patterns . . . remain . . . and may be reactivated at another time. It is as if we were stopping the music by lifting the tone arm off the recording. In psychological alchemy, transcendence is associated with the element air, with its upward motion; and with the process of sublimation, when an impulse is channeled into a "higher" expression . . .

Transformation . . . however, implies that the patterns . . . are actually changed. The structures and functioning of our psyche become different . . . In the sound-recording analogy, the engraved patterns on the record have literally been erased

or remade. Transformation is symbolized by the element fire; and is associated with the notion of purification and with *solutio*, the dissolving of problems or barriers. (p. 15)

Wilber (1998) has distinguished *transformation*, which he views as a radical, “vertical” transcending of the self, from what he calls *translation*—a satisfying but less profound, “horizontal” movement that involves a new way of thinking about the world. Still another useful consideration is that transcendence, translation, or change in general may be more *state*-like (or *peak*-like, to use a Maslovian term), whereas transformation may be more *trait*-like (or *plateau*-like) in nature. Intermediate conditions (*station*-like?) might be expected, as well.

It may be useful to distinguish transformation from other forms of change by suggesting that the former should possess qualities of *persistence*, *pervasiveness*, and *profundity*. A change should make an important difference in one’s life and being in order to qualify as transformative. Additionally, it seems useful to speak of *transformative change*, which suggests an ongoing process, rather than *transformation*, which suggests a completed event.

Perhaps the most readily identifiable cases of transformative change are instances of *conversion*, such as those described so well by William James in his classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902/1985). Such profound changes often are described as instances of *metanoia*, a Greek term having meanings of afterthought, correction, repentance, and regret, but usually taken to mean *a change of mind, heart, or intellect*. These kinds of changes would define only one, extreme, end of a continuum or spectrum of possible changes.

Given that transformative change is relatively permanent (not readily reversible), relatively pervasive (influencing many aspects of a person’s life, actions, and relationships), and relatively profound (not trivial; having important life-impacts), the circumstances of the transformative change may vary considerably. As Metzner (1986, pp. 12–14) has pointed out, transformative change may be abrupt or gradual, externally or internally induced, provided through grace or effort, invisible to others or openly manifest, and may be progressive, regressive, or digressive.

It would be unwise to dismiss seemingly slight and “ordinary” changes as not transformative, because even subtle present shifts can eventuate in drastically different future conditions. On the other hand, seemingly profound, and even highly anomalous, experiences may fade away, without leaving significant residue or meaningful shifts. Whether changes or unusual experiences are or are not transformative seems to depend on the way in which an experiencer attends to and works with these. If these are ignored, devalued, or dismissed as *exceptions*, or if they are not supported by important others in the experiencer’s environment, few if any lasting changes are expected. Yet, if the change or new experiences are honored, invested with great attention and value, are treated as *exceptional*, are supported by important others, and are worked with in an attempt to understand them more fully, then transformative change may indeed occur in the experiencer. Rhea White (1997) has provided a useful account of how transformative changes may occur in the context of working with what she calls *exceptional human experiences*. So, even within

relatively brief exposures to transpersonal education, changes reported by students may be sufficient to have important and meaningful consequences, depending on how the students work with and build upon these changes.

Gaynor (1999) has made the useful suggestion that transformation—and, specifically, spiritual transformation—can be viewed in a systems-theoretical way and can be seen to involve a shift in cognitive structure toward one that is characterized by greater inclusivity, flexibility, and interconnectivity, along with an increased awareness of these increased qualities. The experiences and changes reported by students can be examined to determine whether these are consistent with such a model.

In the course of transpersonal education, students often report increased awareness and change in areas of personal growth. Personal growth may play a role in transpersonal transformation. Additionally, transpersonal and spiritual aspects may be reflected or manifested in personal areas of body, emotions, and creative expression. Increased attention, awareness, or knowing can occur in these areas. This increased attention can foster changes in these areas, and these changes, in turn, may foster more general psychospiritual growth and transformative change. The interactions and reciprocal implications of personal and transpersonal facets are reminiscent of the concept of the interrelationship and interdependence of the virtues, as found in many spiritual and wisdom traditions. In early Greek ethical treatises (e.g., among the Stoics) this was expressed as *antakolouthia*. Although this term literally translates as *correspondence*, it has been taken to apply to the appropriate balancing of virtues (see Dillon, 1977, pp. 76, 301; Murphy, 1992, p. 559; Walsh, 1999, p. 84, for examples). These interrelationships also are suggestive of the cluster of traits and content to which the increasingly popular area of *positive psychology* (Seligman & Csikzentmihalyi, 2000) is devoting itself.

The dances of the personal with the transpersonal are well described in Ruumet's (1997) recently proposed helical model of psychospiritual development. Here, one continually cycles back through, or revisits, earlier or "lower" personal areas and issues in the course of developing increasingly greater access to later or "higher" transpersonal qualities. One revisits, but with increasingly different viewpoints and contexts, one's earlier issues in order to resolve persisting issues in these areas, in order to build upon these and use these as springboards for subsequent change, and in order to play in these areas, for their own value and enjoyment. This model, in turn, has similarities with Washburn's (1995) spiral path of psychospiritual development in which one experiences regressions in the service of transcendence. Adequate attention to "earlier" personal issues is essential if one is to avoid the unfortunate consequences of *spiritual bypass*.

From the research approach of Organic Inquiry (see Braud, 2004; Clements, 2004) has come another useful view of transformative change (Clements, 2000). In transformative change, it is our egos which alter, not Spirit. Spirit, the unconscious, the Ground, the liminal realm . . . is larger than our knowing and certainly not the object of transformation. The transformation we speak of [in organic inquiry] is the life-long effort to bring our controlling egos to a willingness to learn from their greater partner, Spirit. An episode of transformative change may not only be intentional or spontaneous, it may also range from lengthy to nearly instantaneous . . .

The ego learns to move in a bigger arena . . . moving toward a recognition of intimacy with all humanity even as it achieves greater harmony with the vast unconscious . . . Transformation of the ego is a constant, ongoing process . . . One experience of transformative change facilitates the next. (pp. 22, 24, 25)

In Clements' (2000) model of organic transformative change, the ego is prepared for entry into a liminal realm, wherein one is inspired by the unconscious or Spirit. Feelings, affect, or emotions play important roles in these encounters. These liminal gifts, then, are received and integrated by the intellect. "The merging of liminal experience and intellect results in a restructuring of the ego called transformative change, opening it inwardly toward self-realization and increased connection with Spirit as well as outwardly toward connection with humanity" (p. 25). Clements indicates how this model is informed by the *rites of passage* and *liminality* ideas of Arnold van Gennep (1909/1960) and Victor Turner (1987) and by Carl Jung's (1916/1969) thoughts about the *transcendent function*, in which there is a simultaneous holding or union of materials from both our conscious and unconscious aspects—with affect being a major vehicle for the latter.

Another model having relevance to transformation is that of Tart (1975), in which the stabilization processes that ordinarily maintain a certain state of consciousness are sufficiently diminished by disruptive forces to allow new patterning forces to create an altered state of consciousness. Tart's model is an instantiation of a more general model in which earlier constraining or structuring influences (external and internal) may be sufficiently reduced to allow new constraints and structuring agents to take effect—new patterns, new order can emerge from earlier chaos. If the new pattern is sufficiently stable and persistent, transformative change can be said to have occurred.

### *Views on Spirituality*

Spirituality is notoriously difficult to define. A general statement could be made that spirituality has to do with one's highest or ultimate values, one's highest or ultimate reality, and with one's relationship with those values and that reality. A hint of this view is found in William James' (1902/1985) suggestion that the essence of the religious (today, we would say spiritual) sentiment involved a consciousness that

[one's] higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of [one], and which [one] can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save [one]self when all [one's] lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck. (p. 508)

Wilber (1999) defined *spirit* as the highest level of being and knowing, in the "Great Nest of Being" (p. 1), and offered no less than five different definitions of *spirituality*:

1. Spirituality involves the highest levels of any of the developmental lines [of which he offers a dozen or so, including: cognitive, moral, interpersonal, affective].
2. Spirituality is the sum total of the highest levels of the developmental lines.
3. Spirituality is itself a separate developmental line.
4. Spirituality is an

attitude (such as openness or love) that you can have at whatever stage you are.  
5. Spirituality basically involves peak experiences, not stages. (p. 4)

One of the most inclusive treatments of spirituality is provided by John White (1990).

Spirituality can be defined, level by level of reality, this way:

In *physical* terms, spirituality is recognizing the miraculous nature of matter and the creative source behind the mystery of matter.

In *biological* terms, spirituality is realizing that a divine intelligence underlies all life-change and that such change is evolving all creation to ever greater degrees of wholeness in order to perfectly express itself.

In *psychological* terms, spirituality is discovering within yourself the ultimate source of meaning and happiness, which is love.

In *sociological* terms, spirituality is giving selfless service to others, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, caste, or nationality.

In *ecological* terms, spiritual is showing respect for all the kingdoms in the community of life—mineral, vegetable, animal, human, spirit, and angelic.

In *cosmological* terms, spirituality is being at one with the universe, in tune with the infinite, flowing with the Tao.

In *theological* terms, spirituality is seeing God in all things, all events, and all circumstances, indwelling as infinite light and unconditional love, and seeing all things, events, and circumstances in God as the matrix or infinite ocean in which the universe occurs. (pp. 239–240)

Alluded to in these definitions, but perhaps not sufficiently emphasized, are the relational, communal, interconnected, embodied, earth-based, and nature-related aspects that are important in feminine and indigenous forms of spirituality and in spirituality as lived in other cultures (see, e.g., Asante, 1984; Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, & Albury, 1997; Deloria, 1994; Jagers & Mock, 1995; Kremer, 1998; Myers, 1985; Peters, 1989; Smith, 1997; Spencer, 1990; Wright, 1998).

Facets of spirituality noted by students in assessments of their transpersonal education touch upon virtually all of the aspects mentioned in these definitions. It is noteworthy that the body, emotions, relationship and community, creative expression, and alternative ways of knowing and perceiving feature prominently in student descriptions of spirituality and changes in spirituality. Often, these processes serve as pathways or means that allow students to become aware of, access, and develop aspects of themselves that previously were unknown or unexpressed—permitting them to identify, become more acquainted with, realize, and better appreciate the More described at the beginning of this article.

## CONCLUSION

This article described some of the most essential features of holistic transpersonal higher education and indicated how these various principles and practices have been

implemented successfully into the programs, curricula, courses, and other academic offerings of the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. The effectiveness of these implementations is constantly being reviewed, and changes are introduced, when needed. The author's hope is that this presentation has increased the reader's understanding of one particular form that holistic transpersonal education might assume and of its accompaniments and outcomes. It is the author's further hope that this presentation might suggest ways in which others might introduce holistic and transpersonal approaches into other graduate programs and other institutions of higher learning.

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## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Readers wishing to explore William James' notion of the "More" and related materials in greater detail may consult James (1902/1985) and Braud (2003).

### The Author

*William Braud* earned his Ph.D. in experimental psychology at the University of Iowa in 1967. At the University of Houston, he taught and conducted research in learning, memory, motivation, psychophysiology, and the biochemistry of memory. At the Mind Science Foundation (San Antonio, TX), he directed research in parapsychology; health and well-being influences of relaxation, imagery, positive emotions, and intention; and psychoneuroimmunology. Currently, he is Professor and Dissertation Director, Global Programs, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology (Palo Alto, CA), where he directs doctoral dissertation research, and continues research, teaching, and writing in areas of exceptional human experiences, consciousness studies, transpersonal studies, spirituality, and expanded research methods.